

Practice: 345 - Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till**Scenario: #1 - Mulch Till Basic****Scenario Description:**

Mulch-till is managing the amount, orientation and distribution of crop and other plant residue on the soil surface year round while limiting the soil-disturbing activities used to grow crops in systems where the entire field surface is tilled prior to planting. This practice includes tillage methods commonly referred to as mulch tillage or chiseling and disking. It applies to stubble mulching on summer-fallowed land, to tillage for annually planted crops and to tillage for planted crops and to tillage for planting perennial crops. All residue shall be uniformly surface throughout critical wind erosion period. All residue shall be uniformly distributed over the entire field and not burned or removed. These periods of intensive tillage have led to excessive soil loss, often above the Soil Loss Tolerance (T), due to the loss of critical crop or weed residue. The RUSLE2 model will be used to review the farming operation and determine if enough residue is being retained, throughout the rotation, to keep soil loss below T. The producer will then remove operations, or select alternate operations, to reduce erosion below T.

Before Situation:

Row crops such as corn or soybeans are grown and harvested in mid-late fall. Fields are disked immediately following harvest, with rows in some fields being hipped for drainage. Residue amounts after harvest average 30% or less, resulting in bare soil being exposed to wind erosion and/or intense rainfall during the fall, winter, and early spring. Over the winter residue degrades and sediment/nutrient runoff from fields increases. Sheet and rill erosion occurs with visible rills by spring. Spring tillage and seedbed preparation activities occur as early as possible in the late winter and early spring. Weed control is accomplished primarily through tillage, requiring multiple operations. Runoff from the fields flows into streams, water courses or other water bodies causing degradation to the receiving waters. Soil health (soil organic matter) declines over time as a result of tillage practices, low residue monocultures, and long periods of bare soil.

After Situation:

Mulch tillage applies to all cropland and other lands where crops are planned. It applies to stubble mulching on summer fallowed land to tillage for annually planted crops and to tillage for plating perennial crops. It also includes some planting operation such as hoe drill, air seeder and no-till drill that disturb a large percentage of soil surface using the planting operation. Tillage occurs after crop harvest. In warmer areas, winter weeds or cover crops grow throughout the winter months. The residue that remains on the soil surface provides soil cover during late fall, throughout the winter, and into the early spring. Runoff and erosion are reduced and no rills are visible on the soil surface in the spring. Wind erosion is reduced by standing residues. Winter weeds or the cover crop is terminated with tillage, a roller-crimper, shredding, or a combination of these methods prior to spring planting as late as feasible. Over time, soil health is improved due to the additional biomass, ground cover, soil infiltration, and plant diversity in the cropping system.

Scenario Feature Measure: Acre Planted**Scenario Unit:** Acre**Scenario Typical Size:** 100**Scenario Cost:** \$533.50**Scenario Cost/Unit:** \$5.34**Cost Details (by category):**

Component Name	ID	Component Description	Unit	Price (\$/unit)	Quantity	Cost
Equipment/Installation						
Tillage, Light	945	Includes light disking (tandem) or field cultivator. Includes equipment, power unit and labor costs.	Acre	\$10.67	50	\$533.50

Practice: 345 - Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till**Scenario: #2 - Ridge Till****Scenario Description:**

This practice typically involves conversion from a conventional tillage system to a ridge tillage (conservation tillage) system on cropland. This involves managing the amount, orientation and distribution of crop and other plant residue on the soil surface year round while limiting soil-disturbing activities used to grow and harvest crops in systems. The practice is used to reduce wind erosion, reduce sheet and rill erosion, improve soil quality, reduce energy use, increase plant available moisture. The ridge till system includes using a ridge till planter and ridge till row cultivator for building the ridge late in the crop season for the next year. This residue management system is applicable to both organic and non-organic production. This system will manage soil erosion to T and maintain a positive SCl.

Before Situation:

Row crops such as corn and soybeans or grain sorghum are grown and harvested in mid-late fall. Full width tillage is performed prior to planting and weed control during crop production is typically cultivation and chemical application. Fields are plowed immediately following harvest, with several additional tillage operations applied to field prior to planting for land preparation and weed control. Residue amounts after tillage operations average less than 10%, resulting in bare soil being exposed to wind erosion and intense rainfall during the fall, winter, and early spring. Any crop residue that is present degrades and sediment/nutrient runoff from fields increases during rainfall events. Sheet and rill erosion and wind occurs with visible signs of soil erosion by spring. Soil health (soil organic matter) declines over time as a result of tillage practices, low residue, and long periods of bare soil. This system will typically have a negative Soil Conditioning Index (SCI) and a high Soil Tillage Intensity Rating (STIR).

After Situation:

Practice applied per the conservation practice standard 345 to meet the planned purposes. Managing crop residue on the surface year around while limiting soil disturbing activities to those which reshape ridges, place nutrients, and plant crops. All crops are seeded/planted with a ridge till planter, which minimizes soil disturbance while establishing good seed-soil contact. All residues are to be maintained on the soil surface in a uniform distribution over the entire field and not burned or removed. Crop residues provide soil surface cover throughout the year. Runoff and erosion are reduced and no rills are visible on the soil surface. Wind erosion is reduced by standing residues and surface cover. Over time, soil health is improved due to the additional crop residues, ground cover, and soil infiltration. This practice will require reducing soil erosion to T and maintain a positive SCl.

Scenario Feature Measure: Area planted**Scenario Unit:** Acre**Scenario Typical Size:** 160**Scenario Cost:** \$5,952.00**Scenario Cost/Unit:** \$37.20**Cost Details (by category):**

Component Name	ID	Component Description	Unit	Price (\$/unit)	Quantity	Cost
Equipment/Installation						
Seeding Operation, Ridge Till Planter	1232	Mechanical seeding using ridge-till equipment. Includes equipment, power unit and labor costs.	Acre	\$21.58	160	\$3,452.80
Ridge Till Row Cultivator	1231	Includes equipment, power unit and labor costs.	Acre	\$15.62	160	\$2,499.20